

In the claims:

1. In a radio communication system having a mobile node selectively operable at least to communicate packet data with a network part, the network part 5 comprised of a plurality of network portions, a fast network portion of the plurality forming a home network associated with the mobile node, an improvement of apparatus for at least facilitating selection of with which network portion of the plurality of network portions that the mobile node communicates, said apparatus comprising:

10 a storage element embodied at the mobile node, said storage element for storing values defining a database, the database forming a listing identifying at least selected ones of the plurality of network portions together with an indication associated therewith of network-portion capability to provide packet data connectivity with the mobile node to communicate packet data therewith; and

15 a selector adapted to access the database defined at said storage element, said selector for selecting through which of the network portions of the plurality of network portions to communicate the packet data, selection made by said selector at least in part dependent upon the listing formed of the database defined at said storage element.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a detector embodied at the 20 mobile node, said detector for detecting messages delivered to the mobile node that are of values identifying the network-portion capabilities of associated network portions of the selected ones of the network portions.

3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the network part broadcasts the messages delivered to the mobile node, and wherein said detector selectively detects broadcasts of the messages by the network part.

5 4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein at least selected ones of the network portions of the network part broadcast messages of the values identifying the network portion capabilities, a selected message broadcast by a selected network part containing values identifying the network portion capabilities of the selected network portion from which the message is broadcast.

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5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the selected message broadcast by the selected network portion is further of values identifying the network portion from which the message is broadcast.

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6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein each network portion of the plurality of network portions is identified by an identification code and wherein the values identifying the network portion contained in the selected message comprises the identification code.

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7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the radio communication system comprises a cellular communication system operable generally pursuant to a GSM (Global System for Mobile communications) operating protocol that defines mobile country codes and mobile network codes and wherein the values identifying the network

portion contained in the selected message comprise a mobile country code and a mobile network code associated with the network portion from which the message is broadcast.

8. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein each network portion of the at least 5 selected ones of the network portions broadcast the messages upon broadcast channels of a set of broadcast channels and wherein said detector further selectively scans the broadcast channels of the set of broadcast channels to detect the broadcasts of the messages by the selected ones of the network portion.

10 9. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said detector is further coupled to said storage element, said detector further for storing at least selected values that define the database at said storage element.

10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said detector further selectively removes 15 values from the database defined at said storage element.

11. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the database defined at said storage element further indicates availability of the at least selected ones of the plurality of network portions through which to communicate the packet data.

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12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mobile node is further selectively for communicating voice data and wherein the listing formed of the database defined at said storage element further identifies the at least selected ones of the plurality of network

portions together with an indication associated therewith of network-portion capability to provide voice data connectivity with the mobile node to communicate voice data therewith.

5 13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein said selector is further selectively for selecting through which of the network portions of the plurality of network portions to communicate the voice data.

10 14. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the database forming the listing defined at said storage element is created by downloading thereto of a central database directory, the database selectively updatable thereafter.

15 15. In a method of communicating in a radio communication system having a mobile node selectively operable at least to communicate packet data with a network part comprised of a plurality of network portions, a first network portion of the plurality forming a home network associated with the mobile node, an improvement of a method for at least facilitating selection of with which network portion of the plurality of network portions that the mobile node communicates, said method comprising:

 storing values defining a database, the database forming a listing identifying at least selected ones of the plurality of network portions together with an indication associated therewith of network-portion capability to provide packet data connectivity with the mobile node to communicate packet data therewith; and

selecting through which of the network portions of the plurality of network portions to communicate the packet data, selection made during said operation of selecting at least in part dependent upon the listing formed of the database defined during said operation of storing.

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16. The method of claim 15 further comprising the operation, prior to said operation of storing, of detecting messages delivered to the mobile node that are of values identifying the network-portion capabilities of associated network portions of the selected ones of the network portions.

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17. The method of claim 16 wherein said operation of detecting is further performed subsequent to said operation of storing and wherein said operations of detecting and storing are iteratively performed.

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18. The method of claim 16 further comprising the operation, prior to said operation, prior to said operation of detecting, of sending the messages to the mobile node.

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19. The method of claim 16 wherein the messages detected during said operation of detecting are sent to the mobile node by selected network portions and wherein values contained in the messages are selectively stored during said operation of storing.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the messages detected during said operation of detecting identify the network portion capabilities of associated network portions of the selected network portions.